

Application No.: 10/663,432

Docket No.: 4618-002

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (canceled)
2. (currently amended) The absorbent article ~~composite sheet~~ as set forth in claim [[4]] 13, wherein said second layer contains 20 to 80% by mass of said cellulose type fibers.
3. (currently amended) The absorbent article ~~composite sheet~~ as set forth in claim [[4]] 13, wherein said surface of said first layer is a smooth surface processed by a heating roll having a smooth surface.
- 4-5. (canceled)
6. (currently amended) The absorbent article ~~composite sheet~~ as set forth in claim [[4]] 13, wherein the difference in fiber density between said first layer and said second layer is greater than or equal to  $0.05 \text{ g/cm}^3$ .
7. (canceled)
8. (currently amended) The absorbent article ~~composite sheet~~ as set forth in claim [[4]] 13, wherein the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer and the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer comprise at least a common synthetic material.

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9. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet as set forth in claim [[4]] 13, wherein the first layer is free of said cellulose type fibers of said second layer, except at an interface between said first and second layers.

10. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet as set forth in claim 9, wherein said composite sheet has opposite, generally planar and parallel surfaces defined by the top surface of said first layer and a bottom surface of said second layer, respectively.

11. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet as set forth in claim 9, wherein the top surface of said first layer and a bottom surface of said second layer respectively define opposite surfaces of said composite sheet, said opposite surfaces are generally planar except in embossed regions where the fused bonds between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first and second layers are located.

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) An absorbent article consisting essentially of an absorbent composite sheet and a liquid blocking back sheet, wherein

said absorbent composite sheet comprises:

a first layer on a liquid receiving side of the composite sheet and a second layer stacked below said first layer;

said first layer being a non-woven fabric comprising thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers, said second layer being a non-woven fabric comprising cellulose type fibers entangled with thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers;

said first layer and said second layer being joined by fused bonds between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer and the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer; and

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the absorbent composite sheet further comprising gaps between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer for transferring a liquid from a top surface of said first layer to said second layer through said gaps;

wherein said first layer has a fiber density in a range of 0.05 to 0.20 g/cm<sup>3</sup> when a pressure of 4.9 kPa is applied thereto, said second layer has a fiber density in a range of 0.015 to 0.10 g/cm<sup>3</sup> when a pressure of 4.9 kPa is applied thereto, and the fiber density of said first layer is higher than that of said second layer;

said liquid blocking back sheet is disposed below said second layer; and

~~The absorbent article defined in claim 7, wherein~~ said second layer defines a primary absorbent body of said absorbent article and the first layer has a portion that extends outwardly beyond a boundary of said second layer and is bonded to the back sheet.

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet of claim ~~[[14]]~~ 22, wherein a fiber density of said first layer is higher than that of said second layer.

16. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet of claim 15, wherein the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer has a fineness lower than that of the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer.

17. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet of claim 16, wherein the fineness of the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer is from about 1.1 to about 4.4 dtex whereas the fineness of the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer is from above 4.4 to about 8.8 dtex.

18. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet as set forth in claim 16, wherein the opposite surfaces of said composite sheet are generally planar except in

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embossed regions where the fused bonds between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first and second layers are located.

19. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet as set forth in claim 16, wherein the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer and the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer comprise at least a common synthetic material.

20. (currently amended) The absorbent article composite sheet as set forth in claim [[14]] 22, wherein said first layer further comprises a surface active agent rendering the hydrophobic thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer hydrophilic, and said hydrophilic fibers of said second layer are cellulosic fibers.

21. (canceled)

22. (currently amended) An absorbent article comprising an absorbent composite sheet and a liquid impervious back sheet, wherein:

said absorbent composite sheet comprises:

a first, fibrous layer on a liquid receiving side of the composite sheet and a second, fibrous layer stacked below said first layer;

said first layer being a first non-woven fabric comprising thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers which are hydrophobic and heat bonded together to define said first non-woven fabric;

said second layer being a second non-woven fabric comprising hydrophilic fibers mechanically entangled with thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers;

said first layer and said second layer being joined by fused bonds between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer and the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer, and

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the absorbent composite sheet further comprising gaps between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer for transferring a liquid from a top surface of said first layer to said second layer through said gaps;

the first layer is free of said hydrophilic fibers of said second layer, except at an interface between said first and second layers;

said composite sheet has opposite, generally planar and parallel surfaces defined by the top surface of said first layer and a bottom surface of said second layer, respectively;

said liquid impervious back sheet is disposed below said second layer, wherein said second layer defines a primary absorbent body of said absorbent article and has a greatest liquid retaining capability among all components of said absorbent article; and

~~The absorbent article defined in claim 21, wherein~~ the first layer has a portion that extends outwardly beyond a boundary of said second layer and is bonded to the back sheet.